



AXE FACTS

INFO for Owners of Roland & BOSS Guitar Products Volume 5/ No. 2



5 MINUTES with Victor Johnson

It has been more than 20 years since Victor Johnson has had a "day gig." Ever since he joined the Busboys in 1980, Johnson has managed to sustain a successful career and establish a reputation as one of the hottest guitarists on L.A.'s competitive club circuit. His experience finally paid off just two years ago when he landed a gig as the guitarist in Sammy Hagar's new band, the Waboritas, which has pushed him into the national spotlight. In the midst of rehearsals for Hagar's world tour to support his latest effort, *Red Voodoo*, Johnson took time out to share his experiences with *Axe Facts*.

AF: For *Axe Facts* readers who may be unfamiliar with your work with Sammy Hagar and the Busboys, can you tell us about your background with these artists?

VJ: I've always been a guitarist, although I do some background vocals, too. I was in the Busboys non-stop since joining them in 1980. We appeared in the movie *48 Hours* in the early '80s, and I had about an eight-year run with the band. We recorded several albums together... When it was happening, it was fun.

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Going Acoustic with Roland & BOSS

Are you thinking about going acoustic at your next gig? Then you're not alone. More and more guitarists are going "unplugged" everyday. In fact, last year more musicians bought new acoustic guitars than electric guitars.

A good acoustic guitar can bring a new dimension to your playing; however, it can also create a new set of issues

when you play live. Fortunately, Roland and BOSS are also into acoustic guitars, and we have some innovative solutions for your acoustic needs.

Amplifying an acoustic guitar isn't as simple as just plugging it into the nearest amp. Your favorite amp stack might sound great with an electric

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THE HISTORY OF GR GUITAR SYNTHESIZERS Part Six in a Six-Part Series

Guitar synthesis has come a long way since Roland first created products that would allow a guitar to control a synth in the 1970's. There were the early efforts, the GR-500 and GR-300, and the more recent (and more successful) GR-1 and GR-09. Now there's Roland's latest effort—probably the best of them all—the GR-30.

The GR-30 is the result of more than 20 years of Roland's involvement in guitar synthesis. It's faster, easier, and more affordable than any other self-contained guitar synth on the market today. It sounds great due to its new, powerful synth engine and it has a huge amount of onboard sounds. The GR-30 also offers lots of cool features for playing

guitar synth live, as well as features for recording and sequencing.

Using the GR-30's advanced Hold functions, you can play a synth sound—say a fat B-3 organ—press the Hold pedal to sustain the synth, and play screamin' lead guitar over it at the same time. Or, you can play a synth sound, sustain that sound, and play another synth sound over it. Or set the Hold pedal to sustain

some notes while you play others. These are cool features that even high-end keyboard synths don't normally offer.

Another great feature is Play Feel, which is one of the reasons that the GR-30 is so fast. (Continued on Page 2)



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After I left the Busboys, I played in a variety of bands around Los Angeles. That's what I was doing when I got the offer to join Sammy Hagar's band in 1997. He had already recorded the album, *Marching to Mars*, and he was looking for a band to back him up on the road. Now we're a real band, the Waboritas, and we all played on his new album, *Red Voodoo*.

AF: What unique challenges have these gigs with Sammy Hagar presented?

VJ: Sammy has a real long history going all the way back to the early '70s... I've had to learn more than 60 songs from his past, and I'm trying to make the songs sound like they did originally by duplicating all of the guitar tones on those records. That's been my biggest challenge, but I've been able to imitate most of those sounds with my BOSS GT-5 [Guitar Effects Processor], which is amazing.

AF: What do you like about the GT-5?

VJ: The amp emulation features are incredible. I can get any sound that I can imagine from it. I've been able to duplicate the sound of any amp I can get my hands on with it. I even did a blindfold test for some of my

friends and they couldn't tell the difference. And the effects are all professional quality. I can't think of anything that BOSS left out. The routing chain is ridiculous. You can put the effects anywhere you want. Ever since I got the GT-5, I haven't used my rack. It does everything that my rack does and more.

"Ever since I got the GT-5, I haven't used my rack. It does everything that my rack does and more."

It's also incredibly rugged, which is perfect for me because that thing gets a lot of abuse on the road. Sammy parties on stage—it's serious. He'll lean all over me, step on the pedal and spill beer or water all over it. He doesn't do that on purpose; it just always seems to happen because things get crazy up there. But the GT-5 made it through the whole tour without any problems. I was thinking that it wasn't going to last, but after each show the crew guys would clean it up, check it out and tell me it was fine.

AF: Can you give our readers any tips or tricks on how to use the GT-5?

VJ: The only way to run the GT-5 is to connect the send out to the effects loop on the amp. That is the ultimate way to use it. I have my amp set to a clean sound so all the tones are coming from the GT-5. That's the way to get the true sound of the amp emulation. If you just plug into the amp's input it's overkill, especially if you play at a high volume level. You can use it that way if you're using the unit as a replacement for a bunch of stompboxes, but then you're not getting the most out of the GT-5.

AF: Where should we look for your work in the future?

VJ: Sammy wanted to make this band his baby until he retires. Who knows when he'll retire? Look at the Stones, James Brown or John Lee Hooker. They're still going. It could be quite a long time because Sammy is in really good shape. We're going to do another record after this. We don't have any idea what kind of record it's going to be, but you never know with him.

Catch Victor Johnson on tour with Sammy Hagar this summer/fall.

("GR-30" Continued from Page 1)

By using Play Feel, you can fine-tune the tracking sensitivity of the synth by actually telling the GR-30 how you are going to play a given sound: normal picking, tapping, or hard strumming, for example. If you know you want to finger-pick a particular sound, you can set the Play Feel for "finger-pick." The GR-30 will automatically select only the velocity data it needs to respond to your finger picking and filter out the data it doesn't need, allowing it to track even faster.

The GR-30 has two other new

features that give it even more power: a Synth Harmonist and a new Arpeggiator. The Harmonist is a scale-intelligent pitch-shifter that enables the GR-30 to add harmonies to the synth sound. It is programmable, and can even be controlled via MIDI.

The Arpeggiator works much like a keyboard synth arpeggiator, but it does far more. It's programmable, and each guitar string can have its own rhythm. It's even possible to apply Hold to an arpeggiated sound and play over it with a different

sound. The Arpeggiator can also be used to control external synths.

Of course, the GR-30 also converts guitar to up to 6 channels of MIDI, so you can control other MIDI synths, as well as go direct to computers for sequencing or composing. And with two big knobs and four foot pedals, it's very user-friendly.

What does the future hold for guitar synthesis? We can only imagine, but there's no doubt that if it's a great guitar synth, it will be from Roland.

("Going Acoustic" Continued from Page 1)
guitar, but it probably doesn't have the frequency response or the features you need to do justice to your acoustic sound. Acoustic guitars also tend to feed back when amplified, which can be a very difficult problem to overcome.

Wouldn't it be great if there were an amp designed specifically for acoustic instruments that would sound great, have all the right features, and control feedback? There is: the Roland AC-100 Acoustic Chorus amp.

The AC-100 has everything you need to make your acoustic sound better than you ever thought it could. It features two separate channels, a unique 100W tri-amped speaker system, special split-frequency stereo chorus, digital reverb, and much more. It even has built-in Anti-Feedback controls, so you can eliminate feedback with the turn of a knob. Plus, it's got a separate XLR input for your mic—great for those coffee house gigs!



For some gigs, acoustic-electric guitarists plug their guitars right into the PA or the mixing board without using a stage amp. While this can be a good way to amplify your guitar, you have no way to control the sound yourself, making it difficult to get the tone you're after. In this case, you can rely on BOSS, which makes two different processors just for acoustic instruments: the AD-5 and the AD-3 Acoustic Instrument Processors.

The BOSS AD-5 is an acoustic guitarist's secret weapon. It's a studio-quality acoustic preamp and direct box with powerful built-in effects. It has everything you need for total acoustic sound

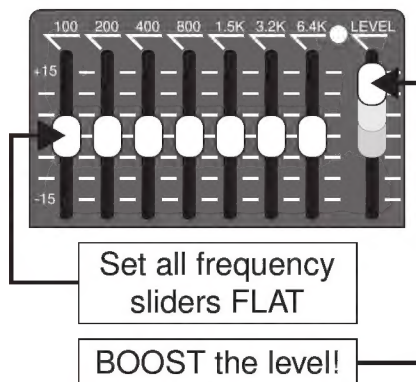


TIPS & TRICKS

GE-7

Delicious Crunch

Want to get more crunch and distortion from your amp without changing your tone? The BOSS GE-7 is a great way to do it. In addition to seven bands of EQ, it has a separate master volume control with a lot of boost—15dB! By boosting the master, you can get more overdrive, compensate for low-output pickups, and get more from your amp—all without altering your tone. Check it out!



Set all frequency sliders FLAT

BOOST the level!

control: 4-band EQ, inputs for both magnetic and piezo acoustic pickups, split-frequency stereo chorus, digital reverb, innovative mic distance and body resonance simulation, and of course, Anti-Feedback control. Your guitar will sound incredible, and you'll be in total control of your sound.

The AD-3 has been especially designed for stage performance. It's a dual-pedal floor unit that features great EQ, the split-frequency stereo chorus from the AD-5, studio-quality reverb, a "flat amp" simulator, and automatic Anti-Feedback control. The flat amp

ME-30

"Glow For It"

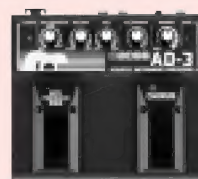
Did you know that leaving the display of your ME-30 under bright light for 45 minutes will cause it to glow in the dark for hours? Try it!



Hot Tip: To assign the ME-30 expression pedal, press EDIT, then press the left effect arrow *once*. The expression pedal is the last effect in the chain, and by going to the left you'll get to it first without scrolling through all the other effects!

Don't Forget...

You can power up to eight other BOSS pedals with a BOSS TU-2, NS-2, LS-2, or PSM-5 using an optional PCS-20A daisy chain cable (included with the PSM-5).



simulator can help make a standard guitar amp sound more like a good acoustic amp—a great feature if you find yourself at a gig with only a standard combo amp at your disposal. The automatic Anti-Feedback feature gives you the ability to eliminate feedback in about a second just by stepping on one of the AD-3's pedals.

So when you're ready to go acoustic, remember that BOSS and Roland are making it easy for you to sound your best.



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Victor Johnson



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New Demo Videos Now Available!

Wanna get the inside scoop on two of Roland's hottest new guitar and bass products in years? Then you're in luck! Roland's crack Demo Video department has been cranking away to deliver fresh new videos on the GT-3 Guitar Effects Processor and the DB-500 D-Bass Amplifier.

The GT-3 Demo Video shows you how BOSS took 32 classic and cutting-edge guitar effects and an extremely flexible COSM-based preamp and placed them in a sturdy, compact pedalboard with an ultra-affordable price tag. If you've never heard the Slicer or Auto-Riff effects in action, trust us, they're worth the price of admission alone.



The DB-500 D-Bass Amplifier combines Roland's new FFP amplifier technology with acclaimed COSM sound modeling to deliver a surprisingly loud and dynamic bass amp with big tube, tube overdrive and solid state tones. The DB-500 Demo Video shows you how its compact and lightweight design can deliver such big sound.

To order any of Roland's new Demo Videos, just call (800) 386-7575 today. You can order your first video for \$5 and any additional videos for just \$2.50 each!†

†Simultaneous video orders only.